Chief Executives Board for Coordination

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English only

Summary of conclusions of the High-level Committee on Management at its fifteenth session

(Rome, 17 and 18 March 2008)

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I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Management held its fifteenth session at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in Rome, on 17 and 18 March 2008. The meeting was chaired in alternate sessions by the Committee Chairperson, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director, Thoraya Obaid, and by the Vice-Chairperson, World Health Organization (WHO) Assistant Director-General and Representative of the Director-General, Denis Aitken.

2. In her welcoming remarks, the Chairperson welcomed new participants, in particular, Thomas Stelzer, newly appointed Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs and Secretary of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and Manoj Juneja, new representative of the Committee for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and host of the meeting. She requested him to convey the Committee's appreciation to the Director-General of FAO for the organization's hospitality. The Chairperson also welcomed Wolfgang Stoeckl, Vice-Chairperson of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), who was participating as an observer in the discussion on some agenda items.

II. Adoption of the agenda

3. The agenda as adopted by the Committee is reflected in the table of contents.

4. The list of participants is provided in annex I.

5. All documents related to the session are available on the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination website at: https://hlcm.unsystemceb.org/documents/200803/.

6. Before moving to the regular agenda items, the Chairperson recalled that, for the second time, at the current session the Committee was experimenting with an open hour informal session. The Chairperson reminded the group that no decisions could be taken during the informal session.

7. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) suggested that a discussion on budget management issues, and more precisely on how to preserve the flexibility in the monitoring of the budget within the framework of the adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards, be taken up in the open hour session. In consideration of the delicate nature of the subject and of the need to obtain guidance on it from the financial offices of respective organizations, the Committee recommended that the issue be taken up and discussed comprehensively at the forthcoming meeting of the Finance and Budget Network, with a view to making recommendations for further discussion at the Committee.

III. Dialogue with the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations and the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System

8. In accordance with established practice, the Committee conducted an exchange of views with the representatives of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) and the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA). FICSA was represented by Edmond Mobio (President) and Valerie Séguin (General Secretary); CCISUA was represented by Nasr Ishak (Vice-President). The statements of the representatives of FICSA and CCISUA are provided in annexes III and IV, respectively.

9. At its fourteenth session, held in September 2007, the Committee was informed that FICSA and CCISUA had started a dialogue on working closer together. The two federations had continued their discussion and had made progress towards developing a joint vision and a common approach for fulfilling that shared objective.

10. In November 2007, CCISUA held an Extraordinary General Assembly to consider an amendment to its Statute. The amendment, which was unanimously adopted, allows for greater and more effective participation by all the membership of CCISUA in the decision-making process. The strategy is geared towards strengthening its partnerships and increasing its engagement in the various forums that deal with the conditions of service of staff.

11. On the issues of harmonization and system-wide coherence, FICSA and CCISUA stressed that the Charter of the United Nations should remain the fundamental reference document for any proposals for reforming or harmonizing the United Nations system. Such proposals should take into consideration their impact on staff representation.

12. On the security and safety of staff, CCISUA reiterated its expectation of having a robust, fully funded and comprehensive security management system run by competent staff, and highlighted the need to seriously address the security and safety requirements in the "delivering as one" pilot countries.

13. FICSA reported that several expressions of concern had been received from staff on the impact of currency fluctuation on pension benefits. FICSA reiterated its commitment to work closely with administrations, through its members participating in the UN Joint Staff Pension Board, to develop proposals to alleviate the impact of currency fluctuation on pension benefits.

14. The accreditation of a third staff representative body to the meetings of the Committee and ICSC was indicated to be of great concern to both FICSA and CCISUA. In their opinion, the reported process for strengthened collaboration and possible unification held considerably more promise than further diversification. In addition, they believed that clear and transparent criteria should be established and applied for granting accreditation, such as democratic elections, annual general meetings, contributions from members and an operational budget.

15. The Human Resources Network spokesperson (UNESCO) informed the Committee that the newly formed United Nations International Civil Servants Federation (UNISERV) had not participated in the fifteenth session of the Human Resources Network, held from 12 to 14 March 2008. The Human Resources Network would request confirmation and supporting evidence that UNISERV complied with all Committee on Coordination/Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (ACC/CCAQ) criteria before the Federation could be invited to participate in the sixteenth session of the Human Resources Network.

16. The Human Resources Network spokesperson shared the views of many Committee members on the need to examine, within the context of staff management relations, the issue of representation and functioning of staff associations and that such an effort should precede the redefinition of accreditation criteria.

17. In connection with the FICSA dialogue with the Human Resources Network on financial support for participation in common system forums, the Human Resources Network would continue to work with the newly elected President of FICSA to develop a business case on the subject. This had been previously requested but had still not been finalized. In the view of many member organizations, the submission of any such business case by FICSA should not lead to expectations for additional financial resources, as organizations already contributed significant resources to staff associations.

Conclusions and action points

18. The Committee thanked FICSA and CCISUA for their statements and invited them to take part in the discussion on the harmonization of business practices.

19. The Committee requested the Human Resources Network to continue its dialogue with the staff associations, reflecting the views expressed by the Committee, specifically on the need to examine, within the context of staff management relations, the issue of representation and functioning of staff associations, and to report back on that issue at the sixteenth session of the Committee. The Human Resources Network would organize an ad hoc video conference with the staff associations on the subject.

IV. Security and safety of staff

20. As is customary, the Committee received a briefing by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security on the general security environment within which the staff of the United Nations system were currently operating and on the nature and relevance of emerging threats following the tragic bombing of the United Nations offices in Algiers.

21. The Under-Secretary-General explained that, in the wake of the attack in Algiers, the Secretary-General had appointed Lakhdar Brahimi to chair an independent panel on staff safety and security. In the meantime, there was an urgency for the United Nations to continue to take action to strengthen security for all United Nations staff and premises. At the request of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security had completed a preliminary analysis of the attack on the Algiers premises. The analysis was carried out through

an extensive consultation process with a large number of agencies, through agency security focal points in the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, as well as through meetings the Under-Secretary-General held with 23 designated officials in the Middle East and Africa and with ministries of interior in the same regions.

22. The results of that work were detailed in a report submitted to the Secretary-General in January 2008, which was subsequently considered by the Policy Committee and which included two main recommendations: (a) the absolute necessity to determine the truth on the modalities with which the attack had been carried out and the precise responsibilities behind it; and (b) the need to proceed with a deep rethinking of the strategic framework and the practical means to ensure the security and safety of all United Nations system staff.

23. Following the meeting of the Policy Committee, the Secretary-General formally requested that the High-level Committee and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network to develop recommendations for the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to consider at its session in late April 2008 on a number of operational security issues.

24. The extensive discussion by the Committee on the matter was preceded by a presentation by Igor Mitrokhin (Chief, Threat and Risk Unit, Department of Safety and Security) on threats facing the United Nations system in the aftermath of the Algiers bombing, and by a briefing by the Chairperson of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network on the conclusions of the Network meeting held in Washington D.C. from 26 to 28 February 2008.

25. In the discussion on paragraphs 25 and 26 of the report of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (CEB/2008/HLCM/3) regarding the applicability of the United Nations security management system to headquarters versus field locations, it was underlined that, while the same paradigm would need to apply to both, it remained important to recognize the difference in kind, not only of degree, as regards security operations at headquarters and field locations. It was also suggested that the purview of the Network should be limited to the field locations.

Conclusions and action points

26. The conclusions, action points and recommendations for the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination by the High-level Committee, as developed by the Committee based on a careful review of the report of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and on the discussion that followed, are detailed in annex II to the present report. Such conclusions will be transmitted to the Secretary-General and to the independent panel on staff safety and security as the response of the Committee to the Secretary-General's memo to the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of 22 February 2008 on operational security issues for consideration by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the High-level Committee on Management and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network.

27. The nature and scope of all the recommendations will be subject to review depending on the outcome of the independent panel on staff safety and security, including those in connection with staffing requirements. The Committee will hold an intersessional meeting soon after the report of the independent panel is released to discuss its content and follow-up action.

28. The implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Committee will take into account the individual governance structures of its member organizations.

29. With respect to paragraph 38 of the report of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network meeting in February 2008 (CEB/2008/HLCM/5) concerning the variety of existing contracts between organizations of the United Nations system and a private emergency medical service provider, the Committee requested its Procurement Network, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, to review the issue and recommend action.

30. Recognizing that chairmanship of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network requires considerable Secretariat support that only the Department of Safety and Security is in a position to adequately ensure, the Committee recommended that, following internal consultations, the Inter-Agency Security Management Network nominate a member organization to act as co-chair. The role of co-chair would rotate among Network members.

V. Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system: management implications

31. The Chief, Development Cooperation Policy Branch, Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, offered an overview of the resolution on the triennial comprehensive policy review, providing some background and historical references and describing the management process that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would lead for the full implementation of the resolution.

32. The representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs explained that, every three years, the General Assembly undertook a comprehensive review of United Nations system work at the country level. The resulting document was a key tool for use by Member States in providing policy guidance on United Nations system development cooperation activities. The objective was to increase the operational relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of that work. General Assembly resolution 62/208 also provided for a very systematic follow-up process.

33. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs was responsible for the preparation of a management report on the implementation of resolution 62/208, which the Economic and Social Council would review in July 2008. In 2008, the General Assembly would conduct a review of the financing of operational activities and would consider the possibility of moving from a triennial to a quadrennial review of operational activities in order to ensure that strategic plans of United Nations funds and programmes were guided by the review. Subsequently, in 2009 and 2010, the Economic and Social Council would review the status of implementation of the resolution.

34. The negotiations of the triennial comprehensive policy review had followed intensive consultations on the recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. The process had resulted in a General Assembly resolution that was detailed and rich in recommendations, with a strong focus on implementation and on national ownership and leadership. It addressed

very concrete recommendations to the United Nations system, resident coordinators, United Nations country teams and governing bodies. It also envisioned an important role for the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. The resolution encouraged the Secretary-General, through the Chief Executives Board and the United Nations Development Group, to make efforts to enhance the coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system.

35. The resolution also addressed numerous important management issues. Together with general calls for results-based-management, accountability and transparency of the United Nations development system as an integral part of sound management, as well as for harmonization and simplification of rules and procedures, the resolution included a number of recommendations with clear links to the current and potential programme of work of the Committee. Among those, the following were highlighted:

(a) Financing:

(i) Need for a comprehensive data and reporting system on financing of operational activities;

(ii) Linkage of resources with increased effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the United Nations development system;

(b) Human resources:

(i) Secretary-General to improve the transparency and competitiveness of the recruitment process for senior posts in the United Nations development system;

(ii) Heads of agencies, funds and programmes to fully cooperate with the Secretary-General, through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, in harmonizing recruitment processes for senior staff by 2009;

(iii) United Nations system to adopt comprehensive policies for human resources and workforce planning and development;

(iv) Secretary-General to prepare a report identifying human resources challenges within the development system at the country level;

(v) Secretary-General, through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to intensify efforts on inter-agency staff mobility, reprofiling and training;

(c) Measures related to transaction costs and efficiency:

(i) Agencies, funds and programmes to accrue to development programmes any savings resulting from reductions in transaction and overhead costs;

(ii) Governing bodies to review cost-recovery policies to ensure that core resources do not subsidize projects undertaken through extrabudgetary resources;

(iii) United Nations system organizations to make further progress on the harmonization of cost-recovery policies;

(iv) United Nations system organizations to continue harmonization efforts such as International Public Sector Accounting Standards; standardization of audit and ratings; and the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer;

(v) Agencies, funds and programmes to harmonize and simplify their business practices in the areas of human resources, enterprise resource planning systems, finance, administration, procurement, security, information technology telecommunications, travel and banking;

(d) Information and communication technology:

(i) United Nations system organizations to increase usage of information and communication technology to facilitate the contribution of agencies, funds and programmes to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as well as to enhance overall information-sharing;

(ii) United Nations development system to continue efforts to strengthen evaluation across the system and to promote a culture of evaluation.

36. In the ensuing discussion, member organizations commented that the triennial comprehensive policy review was comprehensive and ambitious and that there was a need to continuously interact with Member States, in particular on issues related to efficiency gains, cost-recovery rates and use of administrative savings for programme, in order to make a stronger link between the expectations of Member States and what could be achieved.

Conclusions and action points

37. The Committee thanked the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the comprehensive briefing and noted that the management-related recommendations included in the triennial comprehensive policy review document had many links to the plan of action for the harmonization of business practices. That indicated that the Committee was already acting in line with the General Assembly resolution.

38. The various Committee networks, in cooperation with relevant United Nations Development Group mechanisms, would conduct a detailed analysis of the triennial comprehensive policy review recommendations in their respective areas, with a view to evaluating the feasibility, resource requirements and possible time frames of required follow-up actions that were not already part of their programmes of work. Networks would report back on that to the Committee at its sixteenth session.

VI. Plan of action for the harmonization and reform of business practices

39. The Vice-Chairperson (WHO) introduced the agenda item, recalling that at the second regular session of CEB, held in October 2007, executive heads had welcomed the plan of action for the harmonization and reform of business practices in the United Nations system and had endorsed its methodological framework and implementation modalities.

40. The plan of action had been developed by the relevant Committee networks, under the guidance of a steering group led by the Vice-Chairperson and composed of

the chairs of all Committee networks. It had received the approval of the membership of the networks, where all organizations were represented.

41. Following approval by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the plan of action was packaged for resource mobilization on an extrabudgetary basis and it was shared with executive heads, with a view to their reconfirming support of the initiative in order to allow the submission of the funding proposal for the plan of action to all Member States, to inform them about the launch of the initiative and to solicit extrabudgetary contributions.

42. The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Chief Executives Board, had agreed to transmit the funding proposal to Member States shortly after receiving the confirmation of the executive heads to go ahead.

43. The Committee was also informed that the Chairperson had been invited informally to brief the General Assembly on the initiative during the second part of the resumed session of the General Assembly in May 2008. That would present a valuable opportunity to provide Member States with greater detail on each initiative and to raise awareness in as open and transparent a manner as possible.

44. During the discussion that followed, a number of refinements regarding working modalities and governance mechanisms for the implementation of the plan of action were suggested and agreed upon. Corresponding conclusions and action points are summarized below.

45. The staff representatives and the Vice-Chairperson of ICSC participated in the discussion, expressed appreciation of the work done by the Committee as an important step towards enhanced coherence for better programmatic delivery of the United Nations system organizations, and assured their support and commitment to the implementation of the initiative.

46. A number of organizations indicated their availability to take a primary role in some of the projects still to be assigned to a lead agency. Such offers were appreciated by the Committee and would be formalized following consultations within the relevant Committee network and the business practices steering group, in accordance with normal procedure.

Conclusions and action points

47. The Committee approved the launch of the plan of action for the harmonization and reform of business practices in the United Nations system, as outlined in CEB/2008/HLCM/4 and as integrated with the points that follow.

48. Recognizing the critical role that United Nations organizations with strong field presence had for the successful achievement of the objectives outlined in the plan of action, the membership of the steering group, currently led by the Committee Vice-Chairperson and composed of the chairpersons of the Committee networks and by the Director of the CEB secretariat, would be expanded to include Committee representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

49. Committee organizations could voluntarily commit to participation in any of the proposed initiatives (the cluster approach). Working groups of interested organizations would then be formed around the lead agency, which carried ultimate responsibility for delivery of results and retained financial authority over, and

accountability for, the resources allocated to the project for which it was responsible.

50. Financial support for the plan of action as one package would be sought from all Member States.

51. The steering group, based on input from the full membership of the Committee gathered together in the networks, would identify "quick win" projects and determine the prioritization and sequencing of all initiatives included in the plan in accordance with the financial resources provided by Member States, with particular attention to the relevance of projects at the field level. The plan of action would evolve to include projects that had not yet been developed, such as the creation of an independent system-wide capacity for evaluations and initiatives that would be proposed by the Legal Network.

52. The Committee Procurement Network would submit its contribution to the plan of action by 4 April 2008, for review and endorsement by the steering group.

53. In the business practices funding proposal projects would be grouped in three categories: (a) projects ready for implementation; (b) feasibility studies leading to the implementation of one of the alternative options that the study would identify; and (c) feasibility studies whose outcome would determine whether to proceed to any implementation phase or to decide on alternative solutions.

54. The funding proposal would highlight its direct link with the mandates outlined in the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

55. The channelling of contributions towards the plan of action would be arranged through the establishment of a separate trust fund for business practices, administered through the United Nations Secretariat. As an exceptional measure for that particular fund-raising initiative, a programme support cost rate of 7 per cent would be applied by the United Nations for the recovery of all indirect costs in connection with the administration of the trust fund, as opposed to the regular 13 per cent rate, and with the understanding that all direct costs would be charged to individual project budgets.

56. For projects whose management and implementation were assigned to a lead agency other than the United Nations or the CEB secretariat, funds would be channelled through the trust fund for business practices and then allocated to the lead agency. The United Nations would charge, on an exceptional basis, a pass-through rate of 1 per cent as administrative agent, with a common rate of 7 per cent to be applied by the lead agency for the recovery of all indirect costs. Project budgets included in the final funding proposal would be adjusted to reflect the depreciation of the United States dollar.

57. The CEB secretariat would retain responsibility for central oversight, coordination and reporting for the complete package of projects included in the business practices plan of action, thereby preserving unity of direction and the central accountability of the Chief Executives Board membership and the Member States providing financial support.

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VII. United Nations Development Group programme of work on management issues: coordination with the High-level Committee

58. Continuing an established practice of information sharing and coordination, the Committee was provided with an overview on the recent reorganization and streamlining exercise carried out by the United Nations Development Group following its integration into the Chief Executives Board framework, with particular references to activities related to the management area.

59. Susana Malcorra of the World Food Programme (WFP), in her capacity as Chairperson of the former United Nations Development Group Management Group and Ashok Nigam of the United Nations Development Group Office explained that the streamlining exercise had been conducted in an extremely thorough manner and had resulted in a new structure and a programme of work that was rooted in the distinctive competencies and specific mandate of the United Nations Development Group as the Chief Executives Board pillar providing support to country-level operations and addressing the integration needs posed by the "delivering as one" pilots. In carrying out such functions, maximum coordination with the Committee would be pursued on system-wide issues.

60. The Committee underlined that any discussion leading to implications for the system and not limited to the country level, as well as discussions on policy and general guidance, should be channelled through the Committee for comprehensive consideration and buy-in by all United Nations system organizations. While safeguarding the needs of the pilot projects and, in general, the requirements for guidance and support emerging at the country level, coordination between the Committee and the United Nations Development Group on system-wide policies should be ensured upfront. That was considered important in order to ensure an effective contribution to the discussion and decision-making process by all Committee member organizations and to avoid the risk of involving the broader audience too late in the process, when decisions had already de facto been taken and the discussion had become a simple process of ratification.

61. The Committee suggested that the General Assembly resolution on the triennial comprehensive policy review could provide a useful lens through which the operationalization of the revised structure of the Chief Executives Board could be seen, as well as a means to facilitate a clear division of labour between the three pillars of the Board.

Conclusions and action points

62. The Committee thanked both the Chairperson of the former United Nations Development Group Management Group and the Associate Director of the United Nations Development Group Office for presenting the draft United Nations Development Group programme of work on management matters and an update on the proposed new United Nations Development Group structure and took note of them. The Committee and the United Nations Development Group would pursue the maximum level of coordination in all management policy and guidance issues with relevance at the system-wide level. In particular, any discussions leading to implications for the United Nations system would be coordinated by the Committee and its networks for comprehensive consideration and buy-in, while the United

Nations Development Group would ensure guidance and support for piloting solutions in countries and, in general, for the requirements emerging at the country level.

VIII. High-level Committee on Management networks

A. Procurement

63. The Committee received a briefing by the Chairperson of the Procurement Network (WFP) on the discussion and conclusions of the meeting held in Amman from 12 to 14 March 2008.

64. In his introductory remarks, the Chairperson indicated that the Procurement Network had been in place for less than a year (it had replaced the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group) and that significant work had been done in establishing working modalities to be incorporated in the statute and in developing workplans and priorities. The chosen approach was not to spread the capacity too thin but to work on things the Procurement Network could actually deliver through structured working groups.

65. The Procurement Network was going to record its carbon footprint and aimed at having almost paperless meetings, with audio and video conferences to be used as an operating modality between formal meetings. Secretariat support for the Procurement Network was provided by UNDP.

66. Among the prominent activities in the workplan of the Procurement Network were the following:

(a) *United Nations Global Marketplace.* This was the result of the collaboration between 23 United Nations system organizations in order to harmonize and simplify supplier registration and sourcing processes. The supplier database of the United Nations Global Marketplace was available to all United Nations system and World Bank procurement personnel, and it was the main supplier database for the 23 subscribing organizations. A great deal of work was planned to enhance that tool, especially in connection with its potential as a knowledge-sharing and e-tendering platform, as well as with regard to the issue of suspect vendors. A project proposal covering the upgrade of the database was being finalized for inclusion in the business practices plan of action. A service-level agreement was in place with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) as a service provider. A steering committee (chair: World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); members: the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF and the United Nations Secretariat; alternate members: FAO, UNFPA) provided oversight of the United Nations Global Marketplace;

(b) *Suspect vendors.* A first proposed way forward on the matter had been agreed upon, taking into account feedback received from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. The administrative procedures from the World Bank could form the basis for a common United Nations system approach; criteria for qualifying vendors were already common, while common criteria for disqualifying vendors would have to be agreed upon. The time frame for finalization of a United Nations system common approach to suspect vendors was set for the end of 2008;

(c) *Vendor access*. A dedicated working group was developing a second project proposal for the business practices plan of action, mainly aimed at improving access to the United Nations system by vendors from developing countries;

(d) *Financial rules and regulations*. The Procurement Network was actively reviewing the procurement-related paragraphs of the financial rules and regulations of all United Nations system organizations, with a view to providing the Finance and Budget Network with substantive input in the harmonization process currently undertaken by the United Nations, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. The Procurement Network would complete that effort by June 2008;

(e) *Support for the "Delivering as One" pilots and other country operations*. This item was high on the agenda and included a number of activities, support for which would also be sought through the plan of action. Such activities included improvement of the scope and usage of the United Nations procurement practitioners handbook, and work on generic specifications, procurement tools and training materials for requisitioners and other parties involved in the supply chain;

(f) *Professionalization*. The Procurement Network would link up with the Human Resources Network to offer its substantive expertise on the issues of job profiles and mobility. Some useful tools, like the competency framework and the practitioners handbook were already in place, but further work was needed to enhance joint training documentation and delivery, as well as sharing of business processes and practices through the United Nations Global Marketplace;

(g) *Environment*. The Procurement Network is working closely with the Sustainable United Nations group and with the Environment Management Group through the working groups already in place to produce a practice guide and standard specifications for sustainable procurement. Training modules would be ready by May 2008.

67. While acknowledging the need to prioritize, in the light of the role of the United Nations in capacity development, and of the focus on national ownership and leadership and the move towards the use of national systems, including for procurement, the Procurement Network was encouraged to consider how it could contribute to the capacity development of national partners in the area of procurement and, more broadly, of the supply chain management, through capacity assessments and capacity-building interventions. The Procurement Network was also encouraged to explore possibilities for the harmonization of procurement policies and procedures, which could be part of the procurement practitioners development effort.

Conclusions and action points

68. The Committee welcomed the work done by the Procurement Network since its institutionalization within the Committee framework. It encouraged member organizations to provide active support to the Procurement Network in all activities undertaken in that critical area.

69. Recognizing the high value of procurement issues in the Committee effort towards harmonization of business practices across the United Nations system, the Committee asked the Procurement Network to finalize its proposed contributions to

the plan of action by 4 April 2008, so that they could be included in the final version of the plan, before submission to Member States.

70. The Committee also asked the Network to formalize its programme of work and working procedures and to submit them to the sixteenth session of the Committee, to be held in the fall of 2008. The list of expected deliverables and corresponding deadlines provided under paragraph 66 (a) through (g) above would serve as a reference programme of work until the final programme of work was formalized.

B. Legal advisers

71. The Committee Chairperson invited Giuliano Pucci, Assistant Director-General and Legal Counsel of FAO and representative of the Legal Network, to introduce a proposal for a systematic consultation procedure with the Committee networks on documents having legal implications. The proposal had been developed following consultations with representatives of the various networks, as well as with all members of the Legal Network.

72. The Committee appreciated the value of the proposal in ensuring that the adoption of draft recommendations, decisions, policy documents or inter-agency agreements initiated within the framework of Committee networks would be supported and, therefore, reinforced by a common legal opinion, which would facilitate consistent and uniform implementation and/or application across the United Nations system.

73. The Committee was of the opinion that consultation procedures should provide reasonable timelines within which the requested advice would have to be rendered, and underlined the need for full reciprocity in any consultative mechanisms between networks, as well as the importance for representatives of the networks to always conduct internal consultations with their respective legal offices prior to discussion of substantive matters within the networks.

74. While recalling that the Legal Network had been endorsed by the Committee, at its thirteenth session, to become a formal network under the Committee framework, reporting to the Committee regularly, following the model already in place for the other Committee networks, by providing a short briefing on recent activities and referring to the Committee any issues in need of further endorsement/approval, some organizations were of the opinion that the necessary consensus had not yet emerged among the representatives of the Legal Network on the desired institutional and operational modalities of its relationship with the Committee.

Conclusions and action points

75. The Committee encouraged the Legal Network to carry out internal consultations within its full membership with a view to reaching a formal agreement on its structure, working modalities and governance mechanisms and on its institutional links with the Committee.

76. The Committee indicated its agreement in principle with the systematic consultation procedure presented by the Legal Network, and asked the Network to

review its proposal for submission to the Committee at its sixteenth session, taking into consideration comments and suggestions received during the discussion.

C. Finance and budget

77. The Committee received a briefing by the Co-Chairperson of the Finance and Budget Network and Chairperson of the Task Force on Accounting Standards, Jay Karia (United Nations Secretariat), on the International Public Sector Accounting Standards implementation project, as well as on the most relevant items discussed at the Finance and Budget Network meeting of 3 March 2008.

78. A priority for the International Public Sector Accounting Standards team in 2007 had been the development of a stable platform of harmonized accounting policies. Accounting guidance during the previous six months had focused on resolution of three outstanding International Public Sector Accounting Standards guidance issues, guidance on consolidation issues, and detailed guidance on specific issues identified during the first half of 2007.

79. Since its previous report to the Committee, the project team had made significant progress on the procurement of training packages. It was anticipated that a contract with the winning bidder would be concluded by March 2008. In addition, communication with external auditors had been a particular focus throughout 2007 because of the importance of support required from auditors during implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

80. Overall, good progress had been achieved at both the system-wide and individual organization level towards the adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards. For a number of organizations, critical steps required to be in place by the end of 2007 remained at an early stage of implementation. Should an organization need more time than the 2010 target date allowed, then that fact should be recognized early enough to allow a stable roll-out of the organization's adoption project and, at the system-wide level, to allow clear communication and coordination with respect to adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

81. Following the progress report on adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards, the Controller of the United Nations informed the Committee that an important meeting on the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement with the European Commission was planned for 10 and 11 April 2008. The most critical item under discussion would be the single audit principle in connection with contributions to United Nations system organizations by the European Commission. Negotiations would take into consideration the difficulties that might be encountered by the European Commission in completely removing from the Agreement the so-called "verification clause", which was a de facto audit, since that clause was part of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the European Commission and, at the same time, the United Nations system organizations needed to find appropriate mechanisms to implement the clause in a manner that was compatible with the single audit principle and with their internal financial management requirements. A preparatory meeting would be held on 9 April 2008 to develop a common position for United Nations system organizations.

82. A United Nations Development Group controllers group composed of the United Nations, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP was working towards the harmonization of the financial rules and regulations of that subset of United Nations system organizations. It was foreseen that, upon completion of the first stage, the effort of harmonization would be expanded to the rest of the United Nations system organizations. A project to that end had been included in the business practices plan of action. A first draft version of the harmonized financial rules and regulations would be shared with the organizations that were not part of the current working group after reflecting input received from the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs.

83. The Finance and Budget Network considered and endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of its Working Group on Cost Recovery Policies (reactivated in 2007), led by UNESCO, which built on the work of its Task Force on Costs Categorization, led by FAO. The Working Group reached the conclusion that United Nations organizations were willing to harmonize their cost recovery policies, but that the proposed harmonization should encompass the programme support cost rate together with the other components of the project budgets in order not to undermine the capacities of organizations to deliver the expected results. In the short term, in order to best respond to situations in the "delivering as one" pilots, where programme support cost rates were de facto harmonized at reduced levels, the Working Group made recommendations on the cost items that should/could be budgeted and recovered as staff costs (direct costs of the projects), other direct costs, and the typical types of services that are covered by the programme support cost rate of most United Nations system organizations. Harmonization goals were also identified for the medium to long term, such as the link between an organization's ability to reduce its programme support cost rates, and the level of its fixed indirect costs, particularly at the country level, and the size of its projects (economies of scales), and the establishment of common price lists.

84. A joint Committee-United Nations Development Group session of consultations between a subset of Finance and Budget Network member organizations, namely UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP, interested specialized agencies and non-resident agencies, and the United Nations, with the participation of the World Bank, was planned for 4 April 2008, in New York. The work of the sub-group would build on the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group on Cost Recovery Policies, and would report to the Committee through the Finance and Budget Network.

85. Specialized agencies expressed concern at the movement towards a lower cost recovery rate, especially for many joint initiatives with a recovery rate of 7 per cent and suggested that the Finance and Budget Network revisit the issue and report back to the Committee. Many of the specialized agencies had been mandated by their governing bodies to recover costs from voluntary contributions at a rate of 13 per cent, which was also considered inadequate to cover the indirect costs. It was also suggested that the item be discussed in greater depth at the sixteenth session of the Committee.

86. Finally, the Co-Chairperson of the Finance and Budget Network joined the Co-Chairperson of the Human Resources Network in committing to work in a coordinated manner on subjects where both technical competencies were required, especially where decisions or recommendations would have financial implications

for member organizations. Among those were the issue of long-term care and the review of the current mechanism and functioning of appendix D to the Staff Rules, governing compensation in the event of death, injury or illness attributable to the performance of official duties on behalf of the United Nations.

Conclusions and action points

87. The Committee took note with appreciation of the extensive work carried out by the Finance and Budget Network, noted the progress report on the International Public Sector Accounting Standards project and invited the Task Force on Accounting Standards and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards project team to report again to the Committee at its sixteenth session.

D. Human resources

88. The Human Resources Network spokesperson (UNESCO) briefed the Committee on the discussion conducted by the Network at its fifteenth session, held in Rome from 12 to 14 March 2008.

89. Support for the "delivering as one" pilots was identified as one of the priority areas in the programme of work of the Network. A videoconference was held during the session with two of the pilot countries, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam, and with the participation of the United Nations Development Group. Both country teams requested the urgent assistance and involvement of the Human Resources Network with various constraints and problems, identified as follows:

(a) Differences in remuneration and benefits resulting from the variety of contracts used for locally recruited staff;

(b) Issues of inequity for staff performing similar functions but ranked at different levels as a result of different standards in post classification and grading;

(c) Alignment and integration of performance appraisal systems;

(d) Review and harmonization of the role and functions of staff representatives in the field.

90. The Human Resources Network would establish a dedicated working group to deal with "delivering as one" issues using a twofold approach: in the first phase it would address "quick win" issues, and in the second phase it would concentrate on policy issues that were linked to staff rules and needed longer-term solutions.

91. Other key issues reviewed by the Human Resources Network during its meeting included:

(a) *Inter-agency mobility accord.* Organizations were experiencing problems in the implementation of the inter-agency mobility accord approved by the Committee in 2005. By offering multiple options and allowing flexibility, the application of the accord could result in inconsistencies. Furthermore, the implementation was not yet system-wide. A joint Legal and Human Resources Network working group would review existing concerns and propose agreeable solutions;

(b) *Long-term care.* A joint working group with the Finance and Budget Network was being formed to explore the opportunity to develop a common

approach to providing long-term care insurance coverage as part of the overall social insurance, with particular attention to the financial implications;

(c) *UN Cares programme*. The programme was funded with contributions from 15 organizations and amounted to US$ 1,316,000 for 2008. Its continuation would depend on the confirmed commitment of those organizations and others to provide funding for the upcoming years;

(d) *Dual career and staff mobility programme*. As agreed by the Committee in 2007, the administration and management of the programme would be transferred from WFP to the CEB secretariat as of April 2008. There were currently 15 participating organizations which had made financial commitments for the period 2008-2009. The Human Resources Network encouraged all organizations to join the programme;

(e) *Work/life balance*. The CEB secretariat had finalized a report identifying work/life balance initiatives in place within the United Nations system and making further recommendations on adopting best practices. The Human Resources Network would review the report and present recommendations to the Committee at its sixteenth session;

(f) *Guidelines on employment of persons with disabilities*. The Human Resources Network had reviewed draft guidelines on employment of persons with disabilities, covering four areas: reasonable accommodation, working environment, management of disability in the workplace and confidentiality of information. The Network would finalize the guidelines with input from the Medical Network, the Legal Network and the Finance and Budget Network, and report back to the Committee at its sixteenth session;

(g) *Senior Management Network learning programme*. The first cohort completed the programme at the end of November 2007. Based on the generally negative feedback received from participants, including the assessment by the United Nations System Staff College, a proposal for a major redesign of the programme was developed by the Staff College and endorsed by the Human Resources Network.

92. In the ensuing discussion on the Senior Management Network learning programme, strong concerns were expressed regarding the negative assessment of the programme's first cohort. Many organizations suggested they would not be willing to commit to a redesign as proposed by the Staff College.

93. The Committee acknowledged the critical importance of addressing the long-standing need to improve leadership and management across the United Nations system, to support the current effort to increase system-wide coherence through harmonized business practices, and to promote a common corporate culture with a renewed framework of responsibility, authority and accountability. Consensus emerged on the need to carry out a deeper assessment of the first cohort of the learning programme, in the light of the objectives originally set by the Chief Executives Board.

94. The newly appointed Secretary of the Chief Executives Board, recognizing the importance of the subject under discussion, assured his personal engagement in any effort by the Committee to put in place a successful programme for training and development of the senior management of the United Nations system.

Conclusions and action points

95. The Committee thanked the Human Resources Network for the extensive work it was undertaking and suggested that an effort of prioritization be made in order to ensure that adequate consideration be given to issues to be addressed depending on their urgency and importance.

96. On the Senior Management Network leadership programme, a steering group with a strong oversight role and decision-making authority would be formed with representatives of the Committee and the Staff College, and including the spokespersons of the Human Resources Network. The steering group would be tasked with the following specific mandates:

(a) Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the Senior Management Network leadership programme in the light of the objectives originally set by the Chief Executives Board;

(b) Examine the various options available to meet such objectives, including a minor readjustment of the current programme, a major redesign as proposed by the Staff College, and alternative leadership development tools and modalities, either internally developed or partly/entirely outsourced;

(c) Assess the capacity and availability of the Staff College to undertake the implementation of any suggested options;

(d) Develop recommendations for the Committee, to be considered at an intersessional meeting of the Committee.

97. The Committee highly appreciated the commitment towards the requirements of the "delivering as one" pilots, and supported the two-phase approach adopted by the Human Resources Network to deal with "quick wins" that could be implemented in the short term, as well as with more complex issues that would require longer discussions and policy changes.

98. Reiterating its support for the UN Cares programme, the Committee strongly encouraged organizations to commit financial resources for the continuation of the programme in their budgets for the biennium 2010-2011, and requested the Global Coordinator of the programme to submit formal letters towards that end to the Committee member organizations.

99. Recognizing the value of good balance between the working life and personal/family life of United Nations system staff, including in terms of efficiency and effectiveness gains for the organizations they belonged to, the Committee strongly encouraged all its members to promote and implement work/life balance within their organizations. The Committee would await recommendations by the Human Resources Network on the adoption of best practices in that domain.

E. Information and communications technology

100. The Chairperson of the Information and Communications Technology Network briefed the Committee on the three major areas of activity and discussion within that Network: the plan of action for harmonization and reform of business practices, the data communications study and collaboration with the United Nations Development Group. Regarding the business practices proposals, the Chairperson noted that much

of the recent work of the Network focused on that subject, with the lead agencies working to refine the proposals and commence planning activities pending the arrival of funding.

101. The Information and Communications Technology Network Chairperson then informed the Committee that the Network remained unable to commence its study on common data communications services owing to the extraordinary amount of time it had taken to collect the funds from agencies. She reported, however, that the final contributions had been confirmed in the past week and that the only remaining obstacle was the finalization of the memorandum of understanding between the CEB secretariat and UNICEF, the procuring agency. The Chairperson concluded her remarks by reporting on the excellent collaborative efforts between the Information and Communications Technology Network and the United Nations Development Group Working Group on Information and Communications Technology, especially in the area of country-level information and communications technology coherence.

Conclusions and action points

102. The Committee thanked the Information and Communications Technology Network for its work and asked the Network to finalize its discussion regarding nominations for lead agencies on the information and communications technology projects included in the business practices plan of action.

IX. Status of implementation of enterprise resource planning across the system

103. The Vice-Chairperson of the Committee (WHO) introduced the agenda item noting that the report before the Committee on the recently conducted survey on the subject was intended to allow organizations to be more fully aware of current activities across the system in that critical management area.

104. During the discussion, the Chairperson of the Information and Communications Technology Network noted that, from a technical standpoint, many organizations were already practising cross-fertilization. She cited the WFP experience of leveraging the work done by UNICEF for its own SAP implementation as one example. She emphasized that more work was needed in the sharing and harmonization of the underlying business processes. In the discussion, it was noted that there was a need to ensure that the few organizations that had not already implemented an enterprise resource planning system took full advantage of the range of existing implementations, as well as the need to identify areas where organizations could begin to evaluate opportunities for common services in specific functions, with payroll presented as one example. Finally, the Committee stressed the importance for organizations that used the three major applications (SAP, Oracle and PeopleSoft) to intensively share experiences on the implementation and usage of such platforms. One organization for each of the three major applications should be nominated as lead agency for the enterprise resource planning-related project in the plan of action for business practices.

Conclusions and action points

105. The Committee encouraged organizations that have adopted the same enterprise resource planning systems to intensify the sharing of information and experiences on implementation challenges and process and business issues. That would provide an opportunity for organizations that were advanced in the setting up of the enterprise resource planning systems to provide advice and support to those that were beginning the process, enabling them to possibly save time and costs as well.

106. The Committee called upon the Information and Communications Technology Network to identify potential member and leading organizations for the project on harmonization of enterprise resource planning operational and administrative practices and processes within the business practices plan of action, so that all three major software packages (SAP, Oracle and PeopleSoft) were best leveraged for maximum synergies across the United Nations system.

X. Institutional links between the High-level Committee and the representatives of the Internal Audit Services of the United Nations system

107. The Committee considered a proposal prepared by of the representatives of the Internal Audit Services of the United Nations system (UNICEF) in accordance with the request of the Committee at its fourteenth session on the modalities and mechanisms for the participation of the representatives in the Committee framework.

108. It was recalled that as an affiliation of chief audit executives of United Nations system organizations, the representatives of the Internal Audit Services of the United Nations system provide a framework and a forum to promote the development and exchange of United Nations internal audit and oversight-related practices and experience, as well as for the collaboration on and identification of the common positions of its members, in order to add value to their organizations and to enhance the professional capacities of members. The United Nations representatives were part of the representatives of Internal Audit Services of United Nations organizations and multilateral financial institutions and other associated intergovernmental organizations, an autonomous and independent forum that was accountable to its members only. Compliance with the decisions of the forum was voluntary.

109. The proposal provided for the representatives of the Internal Audit Services of the United Nations system of organizations and the Committee to promote the exchange of experience and knowledge on areas of common interest. The partnership arrangement recognized the mutual benefit of working together to promote coherent, efficient and cost-effective oversight and management of the organizations of the United Nations system. The working arrangement recognized the representatives of the Internal Audit Services of the United Nations system of organizations as the audit and oversight forum that brought together those responsible for the oversight and audit of organizations of the United Nations system; it also recognized the High-level Committee on Management as the Committee comprised of the most senior administrative managers of the

organizations of the United Nations system, to which the representatives' forum wished to address itself.

110. In the ensuing discussion, it was underlined that the list of indicative areas of common interest outlined in CEB/2008/HLCM/8 was, indeed, indicative, and could be expanded to include any current or emerging issues that both the representatives' forum and the Committee would decide were appropriate to consider jointly, such as, for example, implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards and harmonization of financial rules and regulations.

111. The experience of some organizations also suggested that external reviews of the internal audit functions could be a valid means of developing authoritative and legitimate recommendations for governance and structural arrangements of such functions that were in accordance with best practice and could provide valuable support to management.

Conclusions and action points

112. The Committee confirmed its support for strengthened institutional links between the Committee and the representatives of the Internal Audit Services of the United Nations system, and approved the conceptual framework and the modus operandi of the working arrangement outlined in CEB/2008/HLCM/8.

113. The recommendations and decisions that would result from the exchange of practices and experience between the representatives of the Internal Audit Services of the United Nations system and the Committee would not be binding for their respective members. The representatives and the Committee would remain accountable to their own constituencies and would not receive instructions from each other.

XI. Mobility/portability of pension benefits and impact of currency fluctuations

114. The Committee received a briefing by the Controller of the United Nations on two issues:

(a) Mobility/portability of pension benefits;

(b) Impact of a weakening United States dollar on pension benefits.

115. The most recent actuarial valuation, carried out in December 2007, confirmed the strongly funded status of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, with an actuarial surplus that was expected to be around 3 per cent. Within the bounds of actuarial possibilities, to be assessed also in the light of the recent negative performance of financial markets, some measures to improve benefits or to reduce contributions, or both, could be considered by the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board at its upcoming Rome meeting.

116. Among the possible measures that could be considered, the following were briefly outlined:

(a) Reduction of the current five-year threshold for the development of the right to regular benefits;

(b) Re-indexation of deferred benefits because an economy measure introduced some years ago currently made the deferred benefit option currently financially non-viable;

(c) Right to buy contributions from other pension systems, a possibility that had been agreed by the Board in the past but was not in the Fund's regulations;

(d) Improved adjustments for inflation;

(e) Additional measures to promote portability of pension benefits, a mandatory element in the pension systems of many Member States.

117. Regarding the weakening of the United States dollar, notably vis-à-vis the euro, the Committee joined the Controller of the United Nations in acknowledging that the situation was creating an issue of serious generational and geographical inequity among United Nations staff, and that representatives of the United Nations system organizations and of the staff would need to address such concerns with the highest attention at the upcoming meeting of the Pension Board.

118. In that respect, the completion of an actuarial study on the double track system of pension adjustment was becoming urgent. Moreover, as a pension was a replacement value for salary, it was underlined that any longer-term review of the United Nations pension system would have to cover the whole compensation system of United Nations system staff, not the pensions only.

119. The Controller of the United Nations underlined that the transfer of after-service health insurance liabilities was an important issue in connection with staff mobility, and that the funding of such liabilities was unrelated to pension benefits: after-service health insurance beneficiaries were a different group than pension beneficiaries, and United Nations system organizations were in very different situations with respect to the funding of after-service health insurance liabilities.

120. Finally, several organizations stressed the importance of considering interim measures to address the urgent concerns in connection with the weakening of the United States dollar, including United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund voluntary contributory programmes for staff and retirees who wished to protect themselves against currency fluctuations.

Conclusions and action points

121. The Committee recommended that the representatives of executive heads at the upcoming Rome meeting of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board pursue, within the bounds of actuarial possibilities, proposals for:

(a) Changes that would promote staff mobility through improved portability of pension benefits;

(b) Changes to the pension adjustment system to ameliorate the effects of the weakened United States dollar, pending an overall review of such structural adjustments as might be required in United Nations pension arrangements to respond to any long-term changes in the foreign exchange value of the United States dollar.

XII. Standards of accommodation for air travel in the United Nations system

122. Consideration of the standards of accommodation for air travel in the United Nations system had been included in the agenda of the Committee as a follow-up to the recent request (see A/62/563/Add.1) by the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly:

> The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Chief Executives Board, to report on the feasibility of harmonizing standards of travel for staff members, members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system, on the basis of a review and proposals by the Chief Executives Board, taking due consideration of the specificity of the work and mandates of the different entities of the system.

123. As summarized in CEB/2008/HLCM/XV/INF.1, the consideration by the General Assembly of system-wide harmonization of the standards of travel went back many years. Recent discussions of the issue began with consideration by the Fifth Committee of a 2004 report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/2004/10) and of the Chief Executives Board comments thereon. In the resolution that emerged, General Assembly resolution 60/255, the Assembly called upon the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Chief Executives Board, to initiate a review of the standards of travel with a view to adopting a common policy.

124. As part of the review, the Chief Executives Board had conducted a survey on the existing standards of travel throughout the United Nations system, the results of which were outlined in a report of the Secretary-General (A/61/801). In considering that report, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions concluded (A/62/351) that the Chief Executives Board had not fully responded to the mandate of General Assembly resolution 60/255, and reiterated its recommendation that:

> The Secretary-General be requested to submit a comprehensive report, on the basis of a CEB review and specific proposals, with a view to harmonizing standards of travel for staff of the United Nations common system, indicating the measures that can be implemented under the authority of the Secretary-General, as well as those that will require the approval of the General Assembly (see A/60/78/Add.1, para. 4). These should take into account the study of the International Civil Service Commission on the subject (see A/60/78/Add.1, para. 2) and the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (see A/60/78), as well as the various recommendations made by the Advisory Committee and the decisions taken by the General Assembly in this regard.

125. The ICSC study had recommended business class for flights longer than six hours, underlining that the matter was, in any case, under the purview of the governing bodies of the organizations.

Conclusions and action points

126. The Committee agreed to conduct a system-wide discussion with a view to developing a common recommendation on harmonized standards of air travel, taking due consideration of the specificity of the work and mandates of the different entities of the system on the matter. The task would be carried out through the

establishment of a joint Human Resources/Finance and Budget Network working group, in consultation with any appropriate technical body.

127. The working group would build on the recommendations and conclusions of ICSC, JIU and medical doctors, as well as on comparative analysis of standards applicable in Member States and in other international organizations. The resulting recommendations would have to cover all travel-related entitlements, such as terminal expenses and rest and recuperation, and would have to be supported by an analysis of the financial implications.

XIII. Other business

A. Update by the Environment Management Group on the United Nations climate-neutral project

128. The Director of the Environment Management Group (UNEP) recalled that, at the second regular session of the Chief Executives Board, held in October 2007, heads of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes had committed themselves to moving their respective organizations towards climate neutrality in headquarters and United Nations centres for their facility operations and travel.

129. In particular, by the end of 2009, United Nations system organizations would:

(a) Estimate their greenhouse gas emissions consistent with accepted international standards;

(b) Undertake efforts to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to the extent possible;

(c) Analyse the cost implications and explore budgetary modalities, including consulting with governing bodies as needed, of purchasing carbon offsets to eventually reach climate neutrality.

130. That commitment had been made with a view to achieving the goal of climate neutrality at a date to be set in the future, by reducing emissions first and then offsetting the remainder through the purchase of offsets.

131. The Director of the Environment Management Group noted the importance of the United Nations system leading by example and underlined that the initiative was both symbolically important and administratively possible. He also said that the Environment Management Group was already working in support of that process on a number of related initiatives, like Sustainable United Nations, in collaboration with the High-level Committee Procurement Network.

132. The Committee was also informed that, in a successfully coordinated and highly visible initiative, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Bali, had set an example of climate neutrality through the purchase of carbon offsets for all meeting-related emissions.

133. In the discussion that followed, some organizations suggested that extrabudgetary funding could be sought for activities and interventions for sustainable climate neutrality, not only for one-time initiatives.

Conclusions and action points

134. The Committee thanked the Environment Management Group for the briefing and reiterated its support for the United Nations climate-neutral project.

B. Dates and venue for the next session

135. The dates for the sixteenth session of the High-Level Committee on Management would be determined shortly, with due regard to avoiding overlap with the governing body meetings of organizations, and taking into consideration document submission requirements for the second regular session of 2008 of the Chief Executives Board, scheduled for 24 and 25 October 2008.

136. In accordance with normal practice, the next session of the Committee would take place at a venue in North America. The Chairperson encouraged organizations that would be willing to host the meeting to inform the CEB secretariat accordingly.

C. Closing remarks

137. In her closing remarks, the Chairperson congratulated Susana Malcorra on her appointment as Under-Secretary-General, Head of the Department of Field Support, United Nations Secretariat. The Committee joined the Chairperson in applauding the tremendous contribution Ms. Malcorra had consistently provided to the work of the Committee through her leadership in the Information and Communications Technology Network and through her active and constructive participation in all the meetings and follow-up initiatives of the Committee.

Annex I

List of participants

Chairperson:	Thoraya Obaid (United Nations Population Fund)
Vice-Chairperson:	Denis Aitken (World Health Organization)
Acting Secretary:	Remo Lalli (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination secretariat)

Organization	
United Nations	**David Veness** Under-Secretary-General, Department of Safety and Security
	Jan Beagle Deputy Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva
	Warren Sach Assistant Secretary-General and Controller
	Diana Russler Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security
	Jay Karia Director, Division of Accounts
	Igor Mitrokhin Chief, Threat and Risk Unit, Department of Safety and Security
	Marion Barthelemy Chief, Development Coordination Policy Branch Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ILO	**Patricia O'Donovan** Executive Director, Management and Administration
FAO	**Manoj Juneja** Assistant Director-General Department of Human, Financial and Physical Resources
UNESCO	**Amine Khene** Assistant Director-General for Administration
	Dyane Dufresne-Klaus Director, Bureau of Human Resources Management
	Yolande Valle Director, Bureau of the Budget

Organization	
WHO	**Denis Aitken** Assistant Director-General, Representative of the Director-General for Partnerships and United Nations Reform
	Namita Pradhan Assistant Director-General, General Management
ICAO	**Fang Liu** Director, Bureau of Administration and Services
UPU	**Michael Mauer** Director, Human Resources
World Bank	**Autumn Hottle** Global Security Operations Coordinator, Office of Corporate Security
IMF	**Frank Harnischfeger** Director, Technology and General Services Department
ITU	**Yajaira Freudiger** Chief, Human Resources Administration Division
IMO	**Andrew Winbow** Director, Administrative Division
WIPO	**Magdi Bona** Head, Budget Section, Office of the Controller
IFAD	**Jessie Rose Mabutas** Assistant President, Finance and Administration Department
	Theresa Panuccio Director, Administrative Services
	Carlo Borghini Controller
	Jose Stigliano Director, Management Information Systems
UNIDO	**Amita Misra** Director, Financial Services Branch, Division of Administration
	Ranko Vujacic Director, Operational Support Services Branch Programme Support and General Management Division
UNWTO	**Peter Shackleford** Director, Administration Division

Organization	
IAEA	**David Waller** Deputy Director-General and Head of Management
UNDP	**Akiko Yuge** Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau of Management
	Irina Stavenscaia Planning Adviser, Bureau of Management
UNICEF	**Omar Abdi** Deputy Executive Director
	Cecilia Lotse Director, Governance, United Nations and Multilateral Affairs
UNFPA	**Thoraya Obaid** Executive Director
	Subhash K. Gupta Director, Division for Management Services
	Klaus Beck Special Assistant to the Deputy Executive Director (Management)
UNHCR	**L. Craig Johnstone** Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOV/UNODC	**Franz Baumann** Deputy Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna and Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WFP	**Susana Malcorra** Deputy Executive Director
UN-Habitat	**Antoine King** Director, Programme Support Division
UNEP	**Theodor Kapiga** Officer-in-charge, Corporate Services Section
UNAIDS	**Deborah Landey** Deputy Executive Director
ITC	**Eva K. Murray** Director, Division of Programme Support
UNOPS	**Vitaly Vanshelboim** Deputy Executive Director

Organization	
WTO	**Miguel Figuerola** Director, Human Resources Division
CTBTO Preparatory Commission	**John Sequeira** Director, Division of Administration
UNSSC	**Carlos Lopes** Director a.i.
	Paolo Ceratto Deputy Director, Administration and Management, United Nations System Staff College
Representatives of the Internal Audit Services of the United Nations System	**Claus Andreasen** Director, Internal Audit, UNICEF
UNDGO	**Ashok Nigam** Associate Director, United Nations Development Group Office
Environment Management Group	**Janos Pasztor** Director, United Nations Environment Management Group
ICSC	**Wolfgang Stoeckl** Vice-Chairman
CCISUA	**Nasr Ishak** Vice-President
	Philip Scarr Deputy Chairperson, Field Staff Union Secretariat, Brindisi
FICSA	**Edmond Mobio** President
	Valérie Seguin General Secretary
Human Resources Network	**Dyane Dufresne-Klaus** Director, Bureau of Human Resources Management, UNESCO
Finance and Budget Network	**Jay Karia** Director, Division of Accounts, United Nations

Organization	
Information and Communications Technology Network	**Susana Malcorra** Deputy Executive Director, WFP
Legal Network	**Giuliani Pucci** Assistant Director-General, Legal Counsel, FAO
	Patricia Georget Legal Officer, Office of the Legal Counsel, United Nations
Procurement Network	**Dominik Heinrich** Director, a.i., Management Services Division, WFP
CEB Secretariat	**Adnan Amin** Director
	Thomas Stelzer CEB Secretary Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs United Nations
	Kamran Kousari Principal Inter-Agency Adviser on Policy Coordination
	Remo Lalli Acting Secretary, High-level Committee on Management
	Marta Leichner-Boyce Senior Inter-Agency Adviser, Human Resources Management
	Ken Herman Senior Inter-Agency Adviser, Information and Communications Technology
	Cristina Milano Associate Expert

Annex II

Security and safety of United Nations system staff

Recommendations by the High-level Committee on Management for transmission to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

The High-level Committee on Management at its fifteenth session, held on 17 and 18 March 2008, considered the report of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network on its meeting held from 26 to 28 February 2008 and identified a number of issues for transmission to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. The Committee also noted that there were a number of urgent issues which fell within the purview of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and encouraged that Network to proceed with implementation, given the urgency of the matter.

The Committee pointed out that the reports of the Committee and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network would be submitted to an independent panel on staff safety and security led by Lakhdar Brahimi. It recognized that the nature and scope of all the recommendations in both reports, including those related to staffing requirements, would be subject to review depending on the outcome of the independent panel.

The implementation of the recommendations of the Committee would take into account the individual governance structures of its member organizations.

Broad strategic recommendations

1. The security and safety of staff of United Nations system organizations should be treated as one of the highest priorities, requiring the urgent attention and commitment of executive heads.

2. United Nations system organizations should act cohesively on all actions and recommendations that will be formulated both as a result of the Inter-Agency discussion of this matter and of the outcome of the independent panel on staff safety and security.

3. Security must be considered an integral part of every activity undertaken by the organizations of the United Nations system. Staff security and safety aspects should be included in the earliest stages of planning at all levels, especially at the country level.

4. Security risk assessment should be conducted regularly by the security management team, through the Chief Security Adviser at all duty stations at country, capital and sub-office/deep field location levels in order to ensure that the requisite mitigating measures are identified and implemented. This should be done in accordance with a structured risk management strategy that takes into consideration the delivery of programmatic mandates, staff security and safety at all levels, in accordance with the specificities of security requirements of individual organizations.

5. Any risk management framework should provide for the different types of risks linked to the variety of mandates of United Nations system organizations, as

current and future security challenges are not and will not be linked solely to terrorism and criminality, including cyber criminality, but also to conflict situations, diseases and an increasing number of natural and man-made disasters, including those resulting from climate change. Security-related assessments and analyses should also cater for sociological and cultural variables.

6. Recognizing that a risk management strategy involves the acceptance of a certain level of risk by both the employer and the employee, the High-level Committee on Management recommends that the independent panel on staff safety and security consider an urgent review of the entitlements (for injuries suffered, or for the families in the case of deceased staff members) associated with various contractual arrangements in place, in order to ensure that personnel, including national project staff and temporary contract holders, are compensated commensurate with the security risk they are being asked to bear. The Human Resources Network is available to offer its technical expertise in support of such effort.

7. Risk management training programmes for managers and staff should be implemented as critical steps in managing risk and crises. The risk model developed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) offers a good starting point for consistent application under the aegis of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security, taking into consideration the generic and specific risk factors applicable to each of the United Nations system organizations.

8. The United Nations system should project itself as an impartial actor to facilitate conflict resolution, both from a substantive and from an external communication perspective, without prejudice to its duty to pronounce itself on violations to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Funding

9. Member States should be engaged with United Nations system organizations to ensure that security is provided with appropriate and sustainable funding, including through the establishment of an appropriate framework for extrabudgetary funding of safety and security based on an objective assessment of needs in this field.

10. Consideration of alternative sources of funding for security-related requirements should be consistent with the principle that security and safety is an integral part of any programme, project or activity of the United Nations system organizations, and that the corresponding costs should be fully transparent, as well as clearly identifiable in their fixed versus variable nature.

11. Analysis of funding sources should be developed taking into consideration alternative business models. Financial support from public and private channels should be sought, as appropriate. The Finance and Budget Network, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, can assist in identifying alternative budgetary and programming mechanisms for the inclusion of security-related resources in programme costs.

12. The Inter-Agency Security Management Network should consolidate a list, for consideration by the High-level Committee on Management, of estimated financial implications of all previous recommendations arising from the reviews, investigations, lessons learned and studies conducted on the United Nations security

management system, including a summary list of all activities in need of funding submitted to or recommended by the Committee.

Governance of the United Nations security management system

13. The High-level Committee on Management recommends that executive heads reaffirm their commitment to the established governance mechanism for the United Nations security management system, namely, the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, the High-level Committee and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

14. Executive heads should ensure that the framework for accountability for the United Nations security management system, as adopted by both the Chief Executives Board and the General Assembly, is fully and actively implemented, that it is periodically reviewed and updated to include lessons learned and that all aspects of its implementation are auditable.

15. Executive heads should ensure that appropriate disciplinary measures are taken against those individuals who are in breach of policies, procedures and practices of the United Nations security management system, and that reports are produced regularly on such actions taken. The Inter-Agency Security Management Network should develop proposals for a range of appropriate measures, to be considered within the context of the regulatory framework in place for each organization.

16. Executive heads should finalize the model supplementary agreement that has been circulated to all agencies, to be signed by the designated official on behalf of the United Nations system, so that Member States at the country level can be engaged to put in place such supplementary agreements, outlining their specific responsibilities on the safety and security of United Nations system personnel and premises.

17. Senior security managers/security focal points should have immediate and unimpeded access to executive level management in the United Nations system and should be provided with adequate resources, both human and financial, to enable them to discharge their responsibilities under the accountability framework. The Inter-Agency Security Management Network should provide guidance on the level and nature of resource requirements.

Actions for immediate implementation

18. *Planning of training.* The Human Resources Network, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and the United Nations System Staff College, to formulate costed plans of action to ensure that the appropriate level and amount of training is provided to all designated officials prior to their deployment. It is also recommended to include safety and security in the assessment programme for the United Nations resident coordinators who are the designated officials in the majority of countries with a United Nations presence.

19. *Training.* The United Nations Department of Safety and Security to develop urgently training programmes for executive heads and their managers at the headquarters, regional and country levels on adoption and implementation of a risk management strategy.

20. *Minimum operational security standards.* The Inter-Agency Security Management Network, through its already established working group, to examine the minimum operational security standards with a view to further refining and redesigning them in order to make them more effective.

21. *Telecommunications and information technology systems.* The Information and Communications Technology Network, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, to prepare a costed plan of action to put in place commercially available secure telecommunications and information technology systems that are compatible across the United Nations system and with full interconnectivity and interoperability at all levels, in support of risk and security-related issues.

22. *Minimum operating residential security standards.* The Human Resources Network to review minimum operating residential security standards arrangements with a view to clarifying the domain of their application.

23. *Review of past incidents.* Human Resources offices of the United Nations system organizations to undertake a review of the 269 families of victims who have lost their lives owing to malicious acts since 1992 to determine the lessons learned and to develop strategies for the future. The Human Resources Network will coordinate the review.

24. *Review of past incidents.* All organizations to collect and forward to the Department of Safety and Security all the data regarding security-related incidents that have been captured by insurance, medical and buildings managers, so that a comprehensive database on security casualties across the United Nations system can be established and maintained on a regular and consistent basis.

25. *Financial and psychosocial support.* The Human Resources Network, in consultation with the Finance and Budget Network and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, as well as with the network of stress counsellors, to develop a proposal to improve and harmonize financial and psychosocial support for survivors and families in the event of a crisis, building on lessons learned from the attacks in Algiers and Baghdad.

26. *United Nations security information management system.* The Inter-Agency Security Management Network to prepare an updated project plan, with costs, for the development, implementation and maintenance of a United Nations security information management system. Such system would also provide the necessary tools for sharing information and statistics on security casualties across the spectrum of United Nations entities and activities in order to support a more comprehensive analysis of the types of risks United Nations staff face.

27. *Premises.* The Department of Safety and Security, in consultation with the United Nations Development Group Working Group on Common Premises and Services, to facilitate support for the designated official and the security management team with specialized expertise to review and assess the status of the existent and new United Nations premises from the point of view of safety and security and suggest mitigating measures, based on security risk assessments. Such reviews and assessments should also offer designated officials and individual security management team members the necessary guidance for their decisions on the adoption of common vs. separate premises. Decision-making on United Nations

premises should be elevated to the Headquarters level based on the recommendation of the designated official.

28. *Aviation safety*. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to advise the Department of Safety and Security on the options and corresponding costs for the provision of system-wide guidance on aviation safety, including on available solutions internal to the United Nations system.

Issues related to the designated official system for the consideration of the independent panel on staff safety and security

29. The High-level Committee on Management is of the opinion that a review of the designated official system is of immediate need. In this respect, the Committee has highlighted a number of issues for consideration by the independent panel on staff safety and security.

30. In order for any risk management strategy to be successful, it requires that information be provided on a timely and accurate basis at the country level. In this regard, the possibility that a security analyst be employed as part of the Department of Safety and Security team to support designated officials and security management teams in the gathering, analysis and dissemination of relevant information should be considered.

31. Where there are existing joint mission analysis centres and/or security information operation cells, the terms of reference and remits for these entities would need to be broadened to ensure that they are operating on an inter-organizational and interdepartmental basis.

32. In the light of the discrepancies in the application of the General Assembly resolution requiring that the designated official function be entrusted to the most senior official in the country, the value and appropriateness of such a resolution should be analysed in the context of changed security and safety related requirements.

33. Noting that the function of the designated official is often the third or fourth one for an individual who is already tasked to be the resident coordinator, humanitarian coordinator, etc., a comprehensive analysis of the requirements and delimitations of such function should be carried out.

34. Consideration should be given to including the functions and authorities of the designated official in the country-level agreement signed between the United Nations and the host country.

35. Executive heads of United Nations system organizations together with the Department of Safety and Security should ensure that challenges regarding the management of security risks and phases and relocations that cannot be effectively resolved at the country level should be the subject of coordinated action. The decision process must be quick but based on local realities.

36. A differentiated approach would be required in determining security risks and the appropriate security phase, depending on specific local conditions.

Annex III

Statement by the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations

The Human Resources Network meeting held at Rome, from 12 to 14 March 2008, offered the opportunity for the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) to actively participate in discussions on the listed agenda issues: conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories; conditions of service of the General Service and other locally recruited staff; conditions of service in the field; gender issues; work-life balance, etc.

We will not reiterate the same concerns raised by our colleagues from the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA), especially on the harmonization and system-wide coherence issues, as we fully share their opinions.

I would like to highlight a few issues of great concern to FICSA, which are:

Impact of the reform on staff representation

The Reform will have a profound impact on staff representation. In fact this impact is already being felt. It is essential that staff representation be independent, responsible and effective. To do this effectively, staff representation requires the tools to carry out its function effectively: sufficient time, opportunities for training, resources and an enabling environment. Unfortunately, in the environment of reduced resources, the importance of staff representation can be forgotten or quietly dismissed.

On the "delivering as one" initiative and following the videoconference and papers presented on the progress report by some pilot projects (for example, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam), discussions ensued, mainly focused on how the programme would be carried out and the adjustments needed. However, insufficient attention was given to how staff representation would be accommodated or how the staff security issue would be addressed. FICSA is very much concerned by the lack of consideration on these two issues, and is committed to work with administrations towards a defined system that takes these two issues on board.

Staff/management relations

We would like to continue with our policy of reporting briefly on the ongoing dialogue concerning staff/management relations. You may recall that this initiative began in the High-level Committee on Management meeting in 2002, with a request by FICSA for support for staff representation, primarily for participation in common system I, through cost-sharing. At your request, we took the issue to the Human Resources Network. Dialogues continued over different meetings of the Human Resources Network and finally, at the recent meeting of the Human Resources Network held in Rome, from 12 to 14 March 2008, an agreement was reached requesting the Network to provide FICSA with a skeleton plan of a business case, to be completed and returned to the Human Resources Network. It is a very important step reached for FICSA, and we would like to seize this opportunity to sincerely

thank the Human Resources Network for its support in this matter, and reiterate the commitment of FICSA to follow through on this issue.

Pension concerns

Over the past weeks and months, FICSA, and probably pension units of organizations of the common system, received considerable expression of concern from staff about the impact of currency fluctuation on pension benefits. While the issue will certainly be discussed at the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund meeting, to be held in Rome in July 2008, FICSA reiterates its commitment to work closely with administrations, through the staff pension committee of its affiliated members to the Pension Board, to develop proposals to alleviate the impact of currency fluctuation on pension benefits.

Accreditation of a third staff representation body

FICSA was informed recently by the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) that a third staff representation body has again requested accreditation to participate in ICSC sessions. This is of great concern to FICSA for several reasons. Not only will yet another staff representation body possibly undermine the credibility of staff representation and disrupt what has become a satisfactory way that FICSA and CCISUA have contributed to the different bodies at the inter-agency level, but in addition, FICSA, and we believe, CCISUA, believe that clear and transparent criteria must be established and followed for giving accreditation to participate. The most recent experience has been that as reported at the fourteenth session of the High-level Committee on Management, FICSA and CCISUA are in the process of strengthening their collaboration with a view to the possible unification of their structures, which holds considerably more promise than further diversification.

FICSA attaches great importance to true staff representation that is responsible, effectively structured, whose officers are democratically elected, independent and effective, and whose membership is regularly consulted. The theoretical number of staff by itself does not constitute the basis for the creation of a staff association, union, or federation. There should be criteria that form the basis of a staff body (democratic elections, annual general meetings, contributions from members and budget). Without these fundamental elements, any staff body cannot have true staff representation.

I would like to thank you for your attention.

Annex IV

Statement by the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System

The Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) values this opportunity to engage in dialogue with the High-level Committee on Management. It is my privilege to speak to you today on behalf of some 25,000 staff members serving in 15 organizations across the globe.

From the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago to the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo, the Federation's diverse membership comprises the staff unions and associations of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Field Staff Union, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Staff Association of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Office at Vienna and my own organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Vision and strategy

At the outset, I would like to brief you on some developments relating to the vision and strategy of CCISUA.

As the High-level Committee on Management was informed at its fourteenth session, CCISUA and FICSA are keenly aware of the need to work closely together on all issues of a system-wide nature. The two federations have continued their dialogue and much progress has been made towards developing a joint vision and a common approach for fulfilling this shared objective.

For its part, CCISUA held an Extraordinary General Assembly, in November 2007, in order to consider an amendment to its statute that would allow for greater and more effective participation by all the membership of CCISUA in the decision-making process. The amendment, which was adopted unanimously, includes some major changes to the Federation's modus operandi in order to better serve the interests of the staff, particularly those serving in the field.

The strategy of CCISUA is also geared towards strengthening its partnerships and increasing its engagement in the various forums that deal with the staff's conditions of service. In spite of its limited financial and human resources, CCISUA pledges to remain fully engaged as a partner in these endeavours through active participation in the work of the relevant bodies including the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), the Human Resources Network, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the Fifth Committee and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.

FICSA will present additional information on the ongoing joint efforts towards establishing a mutually reinforcing and eventually unified staff representation structure that would be more effective than further diversification.

Value and purpose of dialogue with the High-level Committee on Management

The Secretary-General and his top management team have repeatedly stressed the importance of staff-management dialogue, which they consider "essential in making our Organization work better".

In the sphere of the High-level Committee's work, which brings together the most senior administrative managers of the organizations of the system, dialogue with the staff is indeed important, particularly as this Committee is currently giving a great deal of attention to meeting the demands of the Member States for an effective, efficient and harmonized United Nations system.

However, before discussing the items on the agenda of the current session, I would like to share with you some thoughts that were inspired by what the Secretary-General said during a recent meeting he had with the President of the United States of America, on 15 February 2008, namely that we all knew the value of leadership and sound judgement, and that we all recognized how fast our world was changing and the premium that it placed on engagement and partnership.

There are two points to be made about the value of leadership and engagement and partnership:

(a) With regard to leadership, what is clear is that leadership has little value if the leaders do not set a good example. It would be fair to recognize that the Secretary-General on numerous occasions, has set such an example. With regard to the commitment to transparency and accountability, for example, he decided to voluntarily disclose his financial assets to the public;

(b) As regards engagement and partnership, the Secretary-General demonstrated his commitment to working with the staff when, for example, he agreed to replace the Joint Advisory Committee in New York with the Joint Negotiation Committee.

These two tangible actions by the Secretary-General are symbolic and should, in our view, be followed by all members of the Chief Executives Board. Should all heads of United Nations organizations, funds and programmes follow the Secretary-General's example, the United Nations system could indeed work better and regain much of the confidence and the credibility it has lost in the eyes of the public in recent years.

In any event, we would like to recommend to this Committee that the standards introduced by the Secretary-General in his bulletin on the Joint Negotiation Committee at Headquarters (ST/SGB/2007/9) should be implemented at all duty stations as part of the harmonization plan of action.

The talented staff of the organizations we represent have continually proven themselves not only as an important source of innovative ideas for modernizing business practices in their respective organizations, but also as a driving force for sustainable change and for improving performance and accountability. The staff

needs leadership that will set an example and a management that will respect fully the rules and regulations of the organization. These conditions are essential for sound staff-management relations and are prerequisites for the emergence of a genuine partnership between staff representatives and management.

Follow-up on issues raised at the fourteenth session of the High-level Committee on Management

Before moving to the items on the agenda of the current session, I would like to recall some important elements from the statements that CCISUA and FICSA representatives made at the fourteenth session of the High-level Committee on Management, in September 2007.

The Vice-President of CCISUA noted in her statement that as a federation of staff unions and associations, CCISUA was seized by the imperative that staff deserved the organization's protection, regard, acknowledgement and consideration, and that all staff were affected by the momentous changes taking place throughout the United Nations, from the effects of United Nations reform, to standardization of contracts, to something as mundane as common accounting standards.

For his part, the President of FICSA said that he was particularly concerned about the effects on staff of outsourcing, offshoring and other administrative initiatives. He asked who would (and was) representing those people who were in some cases not considered staff.

Unfortunately, the above concerns do not seem to be taken seriously at least in some organizations. Cost-cutting actions with major impact on the operations and the staff continue to be taken in the name of reform and efficiency, without regard for the relevant principles or genuine staff consultations. In some cases, these actions may be taken at the behest of donor Governments or for financial reasons, but these external factors can by no means justify the disregard of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In order to highlight the seriousness of the above-mentioned concerns, I would like to provide the following two examples, which are also reported on in detail by the Board of Auditors in their report dated 13 September 2006 (A/AC.96/1025):

(a) *Establishing staffing quotas for donors*. UNHCR has signed with a donor Government an agreement which contains a clause that requires UNHCR to increase the percentage of nationals of that donor country to 13 per cent of all Professional staff. Such a clause is clearly contrary to Article 101 of the Charter and simply undermines all the principles of the international civil service;

(b) *Replacing regular staff by temporary non-staff personnel*. UNHCR had, in the past, hired non-staff persons (called project staff) either through implementing partners it funded or directly by signing irregular service contracts in order to carry out staff functions. Repeated audit observations had pointed out that persons recruited under such agreements were performing functions similar to those normally done by regular staff members and UNHCR was asked to phase out such arrangements. Although new arrangements had been developed in order to be compliant with the rules, the Board of Auditors still took the view that beyond their functional merits, those arrangements did not comply with the staff policy.

The premise is that we are all subject to the Charter of the United Nations, which is the basis for all United Nations policies and practice. The Charter should remain the fundamental reference document, particularly when it comes to proposals for reforming or harmonizing the United Nations system, be it for enhancing operational efficiency or for improving oversight and accountability.

System-wide coherence cannot be achieved if some United Nations organizations are allowed to violate the Charter of the United Nations or to disregard the legitimate and fundamental rights of the staff purportedly to implement reforms or gain donor support.

Security and safety of staff

Turning now to the first substantive item on the agenda, namely the security and safety of staff, I am pleased to inform you that CCISUA has participated in the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and has a number of important concerns with regard to operational security in high risk/complex environments. These will be discussed in greater detail when the above-mentioned report is reviewed by the Committee.

However, CCISUA was gravely disappointed to learn from media reports that there were serious lapses and shortcomings in the United Nations security management system in Algeria. The Under-Secretary-General, Department of Safety and Security, was quoted as saying that the hostile intent against the United Nations in Algeria had been present and well-known before the attack.

Last week, the Vice-President of CCISUA (in her capacity as the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association) met with the Head of the independent panel on staff safety and security to exchange views, both in the light of the Algeria bombings and in general. Among the issues raised were the following:

(a) The unequal treatment of national staff and the lack of protection at the time of evacuation;

(b) Lack of minimum operating security standards compliance in some offices;

(c) The need to determine whether common premises afford better protection or make United Nations offices easier targets;

(d) The pressure placed on staff by high stress environments, leading to high vacancy rates and consequent overwork;

(e) The need for the United Nations to be more insistent that Governments protect United Nations staff and that those who target the United Nations should be brought to justice;

(f) The need to recognize the extra risk for female staff in countries where women's rights are not fully respected.

What CCISUA expects of the United Nations is that it put in place a robust, fully funded and comprehensive security management system run by competent staff.

Other human resources issues of particular relevance to the High-level Committee

The large number of unions and associations that CCISUA comprises is a challenge that the federation has been trying to meet effectively. Individual unions and associations may have concerns that are not necessarily shared by others. For example, job insecurity and lack of career prospects may be major issues in some duty stations, while in others the growing number of temporary staff or the threat of outsourcing can be the main concerns. While CCISUA plays an important role in consolidating and harmonizing diverging positions, it is sometimes necessary to convey to the advisory and decision-making bodies its members' views as is.

The following are some of the topics on which we would like to present staff views in the course of the current session, but I will mention now only the headlines for the sake of time.

Staff mobility

[Mobility policy must be incentive-based and not mechanical or forced; it must balance staff needs with those of the organizations; it should be accompanied by training; it should take into account family situations and special constraints of the staff members concerned; it should clearly lead to career development.]

Gender

[Progress towards parity is unsatisfactory and not adequately monitored. Some organizations are going backward by recruiting more male than female staff. The need to enhance dual career policy, as well as spousal employment, is key to a successful mobility policy. New measures are needed to enhance retention of female staff, particularly at the senior level. Lack of affordable childcare facilities was identified as one of the impediments to retention of female staff. There was a need to provide an education grant for children under five years old.]

Administration of justice

[The exercise of delegated authority in disciplinary matters is an issue of concern in a number of duty stations. Lack of respect for the due process rights of the staff during investigations results in vitiating disciplinary decisions and moral damage to staff.]

Contractual policies

[The framework for contractual arrangements, the reform of the job classification system for General Service staff and the review of the salary survey methodologies are matters of high staff interest. CCISUA plans to coordinate efforts with FICSA in order to ensure effective staff participation in these important reviews.]

Staff representation and staff-management consultative machinery

[There is a need to extend substantial additional support to elected staff representatives to improve their capacity to perform added duties and to meet the

financial requirements for participation in joint staff-management consultative machinery.]

Effect of the declining United States dollar on pensions

[The continuing decline of the value of the United States dollar has serious impact on pension benefits. This situation requires collaborative efforts to develop measures to alleviate and mitigate the negative impact of the devaluation.]

We look forward to fruitful dialogue and I thank you for your attention.